

**DELAWARE COMMISSION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
MEETING MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 26, 2008**

Members Present: Ennis, Lardizzone, Carroll, Corsa, Endres, Evans, Harden, Kitson, Smith, Spitzfaden, and Thompson

Members Excused: Lank, Newstadt, Timberman and Wasson

Staff Present: Davila and Quinlan

Guests: George Goss and John Weidenhof (Wounded Warriors Fund), Garry Morris (American Legion), Al Carter (SOS), Ron Sarg (MOAA)

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to our Nations Flag.

Chairman Ennis opened the meeting by introducing the guests.

Mr. Weidenhof spoke about the Wounded Warriors Fund and provided information about the program. He also announced that they are raising funds by selling tickets to an event at Dover Downs Hotel & Casino on April 25, 2008, 7:00 pm.

Mr. Sarg discussed contributions pertaining to the Vietnam Veterans Monument fund and provided information.

Ms. Quinlan provided meeting minutes from the Delaware Veterans Home Operational Advisory Committee. She provided updates concerning the Home and answered questions. Mr. Carter addressed per diem reimbursement from the VA.

**MOTION BY HARDEN TO ACCEPT JANUARY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES,  
SECONDED BY LARDIZZONE, MOTION CARRIED.**

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **CEMETERY COMMITTEE**

Mr. Davila provided information concerning renovations and improvements that are occurring at the Northern Cemetery. He and Commissioner Lardizzone attended Elmer Saxton's funeral on Saturday.

### **COMMEMORATIVE AFFAIRS**

Chairman Ennis inquired as to the status of obtaining a speaker for the Memorial Day Ceremony at the bridge on May 30, 2008.

### **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

Commissioner Endres reported that he went to the Advisory Committee meeting at the Veterans Home on February 6, 2008. It was stressed at the meeting that this was only an advisory committee. There

was discussion about the meeting, as well as the progress of the organizational plaques. Commissioner Endres reported that the Veterans Home Fund balance is currently \$90,021.95 and the Friends of Veterans Fund is \$489,082.59. Commissioner Corsa questioned how the funds would be utilized. Mr. Carter indicated that one fund was for the pavilion and fishing pier; which is estimated at \$1.2M. To date, the money from the fund has been utilized to buy a flag monument, gazebos and four or five other items. There was further discussion about fundraising efforts, as well as an informational video that will be used by the Home for interested parties.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS**

Evans (American Legion) – The National Commander will be arriving in Delaware on March 12, 2008. He will be touring the Veterans Home on March 14, 2008. Commissioner Evans stated that he had copies of the Commander's itinerary for those interested. The Commander's banquet will be held at the American Legion Home in Laurel.

Corsa (VVA) – Reported that VVA Chapter 850 is moving forward with the monument for Kent County.

Kitson (VFW) – The VFW Mid-Winter Conference in Washington, DC will be held March 2-5, 2008. At the conference they will announce the national winner of the Voice of Democracy Program. The State winner for the Patriot Pen Program for fifth and sixth graders came in 13<sup>th</sup> place in the national competition. The National President for the Ladies Auxiliary will be in Delaware during March 9-11, 2008.

Harden (WAVES) – They participated in the Salute to Hospitalized Veterans at the VA Hospital in Wilmington. She found a new place to order their organizational flags; they hope to have them in three weeks.

Lardizzone (DAV) – Announced that he will be attending the DAV Commander & Adjutant Mid-Winter Conference in Washington, DC from March 1-5, 2008. They will be meeting with the Senate and House Military Committee on March 4, 2008.

Ennis (KWVA) – Their Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for March 8, 2008, at the Sheraton in Dover; with installation of the new officers to follow.

Thompson (MCL) – Their Department meeting for Delaware will be held in Dover on Saturday, March 15, 2008.

Carroll (MOPH) – Their Department Convention will be held at the Dover AFB Museum on May 17, 2008, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm. The Purple Heart legislation was passed on to the House and is now House Joint Resolution #8. He hopes that if anyone is in touch with their legislators that they will put in a good word for this bill. On February 16, 2008, Sussex Chapter 1787 presented plaques to family members of a local KIA veteran at Seaford High School. The same Chapter will be holding an outreach event at the Long Neck Senior Center in conjunction with several other veterans groups. Their National Service Officer, Rich Magner, has elected to retire from his position; his replacement has not yet been selected. They also participated in the Salute to Hospitalized Veterans at the VA Hospital in Wilmington.

Smith (AMVETS) – He shared that he and Commissioner Lardizzone visited with a medically ill veteran; who was very appreciative. He suggested that if they are not already doing so, veterans organizations need to try and meet with as many of these veterans as possible.

Spitzfaden (MOAA) – Reported that there is a move in Washington, DC to charge for all levels of TRICARE, including TRICARE for Life. Therefore, MOAA is on a national campaign to have everyone write to their senators and representatives to thwart this measure.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Carter reported that the State of Delaware is in a hiring slowdown. He advised that all State spending will be tightened and discretionary spending will be looked at very closely. Mr. Davila reported that they would be looking at a 3% reversion of their current budget. For 2009, they have been asked to put together 3%, 5% and 10% potential budget cuts.

Commissioner Spitzfaden shared with the Commission how the system is being nickeled and dimed; he feels that retirees are being treated like second-rate citizens. Mr. Davila elaborated on this topic and discussion followed.

## **ITEMS FOR THE GOOD AND WELFARE OF THE ORGANIZATION**

Commissioner Thompson reminded everyone who plans to attend the Joint Veterans Affairs Committee Hearing on March 12, 2008, they need to RSVP.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING:      MARCH 25, 2008 (10:00 AM)**

**LOCATION:                              Robbins Bldg, 802 Silver Lake Blvd, Suite 100  
Dover, DE**

**ADJOURNED**